

Additions to the avifauna of Mali

Robert J. Dowsett and Françoise Dowsett-Lemaire

Additions à l'avifaune du Mali. L'article énumère 27 espèces nouvelles pour le Mali depuis Dowsett (1993). La plupart ont été observées par les auteurs lors de deux séjours récents de plus de deux mois, en saison sèche (2002) et au début des pluies (2004). L'article inclut également les observations nouvelles provenant d'autres sources, publiées ou non. A part quelques espèces paléarctiques, la grande majorité des espèces nouvelles sont des oiseaux sédentaires de divers milieux (Sahel, forêts sèches, collines rocheuses), surtout des régions prospectées par les auteurs dans le sud et centre du pays.

In recent years a number of species have been found in Mali that are new to the list presented by Dowsett (1993). In addition to our own observations, relating to visits totalling more than two months in both dry (2002) and early wet seasons (2004), we have found it useful to detail published and unpublished additions from other sources. Coordinates of localities in Mali are presented in a Gazetteer (see Appendix). The abbreviation NP = National Park.

Great Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*

Two in Yanfolila marsh on 22 February 2002 and one by a grassy pool in the Niger Delta at Batamani on 25–26 February 2002. This Palearctic migrant has also been reported from Lac Débo and elsewhere in the Delta (where it winters quite commonly) by Dodman *et al.* (1999) and Wymenga *et al.* (2002), and from Korioumé, near Tombouctou (one seen in flight, 3 March 1999) by C. Carter (*in litt.*).

Golden Eagle *Aquila chrysaetos*

Found to breed on Tirharhar Mt, Adrar des Iforas, by Goar & Rutkowski (2000).

Forbes's Plover *Charadrius forbesi*

An adult on a laterite bowal south of Sagabari, on 3 June 2004. Key differences from Three-banded Plover *C. tricollaris* were well seen (dark, not white, forehead; absence of white wingbar). This habitat is favoured for breeding in Ghana (pers. obs.). Also reported from the Bagoé bridge area, where three were noted on 15 March 1999 (C. Carter *in litt.*). The species was previously known from as close as Parc National du Niokolo Koba (c.13°N 12°30'W) in south-east Senegal, where it has been collected (Morel & Morel 1990).

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

A group of 20 midway between Gourma-Rharous and Korioumé on 1 March 1999 were compared briefly with a nearby flock of Black-tailed Godwits *L. limosa*, and in flight the distinctive wing and tail pattern was well seen (C. Carter & M. Cameron *in litt.*). Wymenga *et al.* (2002) mention two records of singles in the Niger Delta, but without details. This Palearctic migrant is normally coastal, occurring only rarely inland.

Adamawa Turtle Dove *Streptopelia hypopyrrha*

Discreet but widespread in gallery forest in the south-west. Several singing and displaying at Tambalé and Tombané in the Monts Mandingues on 5–8 February 2002. One heard at Soukoutali on the Bafing and another at the Bafing/Balé confluence, near Bindougou on the Guinea border, on 11–15 February 2002. One heard in gallery forest on the Baoulé-sud, near Madina Diassa, on 24 May 2004; several singing and displaying at Sanfinian on 2 June; and several coming to drink at pools at the Baoulé/Badinko and Baoulé/Bakoye confluences, on 4–6 June 2004. The song is a distinctive double purr, the second purr being somewhat disyllabic, similar to that of European Turtle Dove *S. turtur*, but much lower pitched. These records partially fill the gap in the known distribution of the species, between Senegambia in the west and Togo and Nigeria in the east (Payne *et al.* 2000, Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire 1993) (see Fig. 1).

Red-headed Lovebird *Agapornis pullarius*

One in a low bush on a sandbar in the middle of the Niger River, opposite Kangaba, on 22 June 2004. Dowsett (1993) had rejected a previous 'observation incertaine' from Missira, Boucle du Baoulé (de Bie & Morgan 1989), but Spierenburg

(2000) observed small groups several times near Bougouni, especially during the rains. The same author also had a record from Bamako, which he suggested was probably an escaped cagebird, but we see no reason to suppose that the Kangaba and Bougouni observations were not of wild birds.

Thick-billed Cuckoo *Pachycoxyx audeberti*

The typical whistled song of this cuckoo (a loud *fuwee-puik*, repeated in flight) was heard in woodland at Madina Diassa, on 23 May 2004 (where it was imitated locally by the resident White-crowned Robin Chat *Cossypha albicapilla*), and on the edge of gallery forest at Farako, on 28 May 2004. Its putative host, White Helmet-shrike *Prionops plumatus*, is quite widespread in southern Mali. These records represent a range extension from Haut Niger NP (c.10°20'N 10°30'W) in Guinea (Nikolaus 2000), Comoé NP (c.09°25'N 03°50'W) in northern Côte d'Ivoire (Thiollay 1985) and the Mole River, Mole NP (c.09°18'N 01°47'W) in Ghana (pers. obs. August 2004 and March 2005).

Black-shouldered Nightjar *Caprimulgus [pectoralis] nigriscapularis*

Singing in woodland on the edge of riparian woodland at Tambalé, in the Monts Mandingues, on 4 February 2002. More common at the edge of gallery forest near Madina Diassa, where several were singing at dusk on 20 February; silent in May 2004, but several were feeding at dusk over water and around gallery forest at the same site. Probably more widespread, but needs to be searched for in the dry season, when it is vocally

active. These, and recent observations from northern Ghana (pers. obs.), extend the known range from Haut Niger NP in Guinea (Nikolaus 2000) and Comoé NP in Côte d'Ivoire (Demey & Fishpool 1991).

Mottled Swift *Apus aequatorialis*

One seen near Madina Diassa on 23 May 2004 (possibly associated with a large rocky hill east of the Baoulé-sud, not visited). Very common (often hundreds together) in the Sahel from Douentza north and east to Mare de Gossi, on 14–19 June 2004. Groups were present around all large cliffs from Douentza to Hombori, but were also feeding over or drinking at pools away from cliffs. The degree of vocal activity, and pairs chasing each other, was indicative of breeding. Seen many times at close range when coming to drink, and these birds clearly belong to a pale race, probably *lowei*. Further details on plumage and voice are given elsewhere (Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire in press). First reported by Spierenburg (2000), who saw 100 on 13 October 1989 at Teli, Bandiagara. By contrast, we could find none of the huge numbers of Alpine Swifts *A. melba* reported as probably breeding in the area by Thiollay (1974); all other reports of that species that we have traced from West Africa point to it being no more than a non-breeding migrant from the Palearctic (Dowsett & Dowsett-Lemaire in press).

Narina's Trogon *Apaloderma narina*

A male at the Bafing/Balé confluence and another on the Baoulé-sud near Madina Diassa, in February 2002, both in mixed-species flocks. In

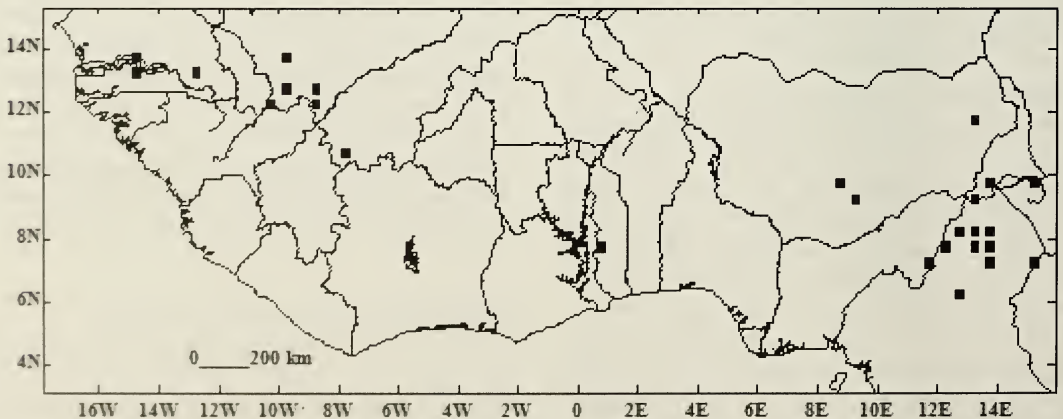


Figure 1. Distribution of Adamawa Turtle Dove *Streptopelia hypopyrrha*
Répartition de la Tourterelle de l'Adamawa *Streptopelia hypopyrrha*

2004, at least three seen (two males, one female) and two males heard at Sanfinian on 2 June; two singing near Madina Diassa on 23–24 May; two heard at Farako on 28 May; and one male seen and heard on the Baoulé west of Négala on 8 June. Habitat consisted of well-developed evergreen gallery forest (Farako to Sanfinian), or partially deciduous forest (as near Négala, where *Anogeissus* was the main large tree). The only previous records north of 10°N west of Ghana are from Guinea, in Haut Niger NP, c.10°20'N (Nikolaus 2000) and Chutes de la Sâla, Labé, at 11°19'N 12°31'W (R. Demey pers. comm.).

Yellow-rumped Tinkerbird *Pogoniulus bilineatus*

One singing (the short series of 4–6 *pop* notes, with a distinct pause between phrases) in riparian forest at Woroni Falls, in the extreme south, on 27 May 2004. Known north to Dinndéfélou in south-east Senegal, 12°23'N 12°19'W (specimens: Morel & Morel 1990), and Haut Niger NP, c.10°20'N (Nikolaus 2000) and Chutes de la Sâla, Labé, 11°19'N 12°31'W (R. Demey pers. comm.) in Guinea.

African Pitta *Pitta angolensis*

Recorded c.5 km from Missira, in Boucle du Baoulé NP, where Paul Kiepe (pers. comm.) had excellent views down to c.2 m of this unmistakable bird in November 1980. Remarkable as this record is—the pitta was previously quite unrecorded in West Africa north of 07°30'N—, the area is rich in thickets, which could be suitable for breeding (pers. obs. 2004).

Simple Greenbul *Chlorocichla simplex*

One singing (the typical muffled nasal chattering) in thicket on the edge of the Baoulé-sud, near Madina Diassa, at the northern limit of the species' range, on 21 February 2002. It could not be found again an hour later, when playback was used, or in May 2004. It was probably a wanderer from northern Côte d'Ivoire, where it is known from Korhogo (09°22'N 05°31'W), and Odienné, on the same Baoulé-sud river, at 09°36'N 07°32'W (Brunel & Thiollay 1969).

Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala*

Small numbers in sparse, dense bushes within heavily grazed dunes at several places, on 28 February and 1 March 1999: 15 km north of Gossi, in the Dédiéten area, and near Gourma-

Rharous (C. Carter & M. Cameron *in litt.*). Recorded at Tirharhar Mt, Adrar des Iforas, in January–March, by Clouet & Goar (2003). Already known from as far south as Ngourti in Niger, 15°19'N 13°12'E (Giraudoux *et al.* 1988).

Spectacled Warbler *Sylvia conspicillata*

A female seen at close range (the thin white eye-ring, pale chin and small size were noted, among other details) near Batamani, in 'brousse tigrée' (low bush with *Acacia*, *Balanites*, *Diospyros mespiliiformis*, *Guiera*, *Piliostigma reticulatum* etc.) on 1 March 2002. Recorded only north of c.17°N in Niger (Newby *et al.* 1987, Giraudoux *et al.* 1988), but in some years not uncommon south of 16°N in Senegal (Rodwell *et al.* 1996).

Dorst's Cisticola *Cisticola dorsti*

Several in open Sudanian woodland in the south-west in February 2002: at Monts Mandingues (Tambalé, Tombané), Baoulé-sud and near the Bafing River at Bindougou and Soukoutali (one mist-netted). Not singing in February (when one, however, was prompted into giving a typical trill by using playback), but one was singing spontaneously on 25 May near Kalana. It is this species, and not the Sahelian Red-pate Cisticola *C. ruficeps*, that occurs in Mali; this is discussed in detail elsewhere (Dowsett-Lemaire *et al.* in press).

River Prinia *Prinia fluviatilis*

Previously mentioned as 'possible' for the Ag Ouag-Ag Arbech Important Bird Area (Robertson 2001) based on a sighting at Gao by P. Robertson (*in litt.*). We observed one calling (the dry *frri* characteristic of the species) on the southern edge of Gao, on 17 June 2002, in *Acacia* and *Hyphaene* on a beach near the Niger River. Morphologically and vocally this matched our experience elsewhere, the available sound-recordings (including the call-notes FD-L taped at Djoudj NP in Senegal) and literature. (The statement in the summary of Chappuis *et al.* (1992) that the species had been discovered in 'northern Mali' is a slip of the pen for 'Niger (along the Niger River between Tillabéri and Gao)' as mentioned in the body of the paper, the locality where Chappuis (1974) recorded it.)

Yellow-breasted Apalis *Apalis flavida*

Common in dense evergreen gallery forest throughout the south-west, at over 12 localities from the Baoulé-sud (Madina Diassa) and Sikasso

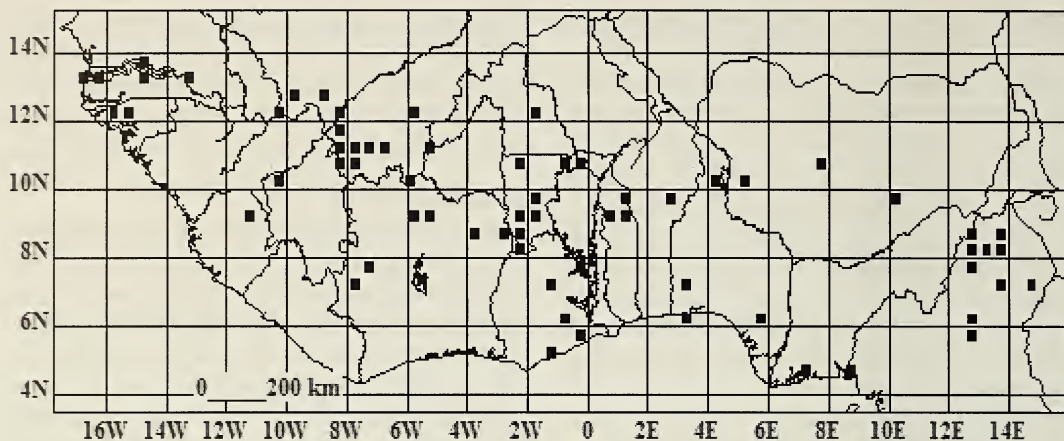


Figure 2. Distribution of Yellow-breasted Apalis *Apalis flavida* in western Africa
Répartition de l'Apalis à gorge jaune *Apalis flavida* en Afrique de l'Ouest

area, north to the Baoulé west of Négala (see Fig. 2). Not found further north at Pont-Bani, but there is suitable habitat there. Small numbers also seen and trapped on the Baoulé-sud, in the Bougouni area, by Salewski (1998) and Spierenburg (2000).

Spotted Creeper *Salpornis spilonotus*

One in a small mixed-species flock in woodland between Nalla and Kalana, on 25 May 2004 (with M. Crickmore). The nearest records would seem to be from Tingréla (10°29'N 06°24'W) in Côte d'Ivoire (Thiollay 1985), Haut Niger NP in Guinea (Nikolaus 2000), and a single sighting from Niokolo-Koba NP in south-east Senegal (Morel & Morel 1990).

Brown Sunbird *Anthreptes gabonicus*

Two seen well on the edge of the gallery forest on the Baoulé-sud, near Madina Diassa, on 21 February 2002; they were chasing each other. Not seen again in May 2004. A Guineo-Congolian species of mangrove and riparian forest, occasionally recorded along rivers inland, thus known north in Côte d'Ivoire to Léraba (10°08'N 5°05'W), also in February (Walsh 1986), and north in Guinea to Chutes de la Sála (11°17'N 12°30'W) in March 2003 (an adult with begging juvenile: R. Demey *in litt.*).

Tropical Boubou *Laniarius aethiopicus*

Small populations (several calling) in dense gallery forest near Madina Diassa and at Farako, in February 2002 and May 2004. Partial to liana tan-

gles. Clear views ruled out the (unlikely) possibility of Turati's Boubou *L. turatii*. Not reported from extreme north-west Côte d'Ivoire, but known in Guinea from Haut Niger NP (Nikolaus 2000).

Dybowski's Twinspot *Euschistospiza dybowskii*

One coming to drink with Orange-cheeked Waxbills *Estrilda melpoda* at a pool in riparian woodland at Tambalé, Monts Mandingues, on 5 February 2002. Probably occurs in other parts of the extreme south-west. Not reported from extreme northern Côte d'Ivoire, but known from Haut Niger NP (Nikolaus 2000) and Labé (R. Demey pers. comm) in Guinea to south-east Senegal (Morel & Morel 1990).

Black-bellied Firefinch *Lagonosticta rara*

Occurs at the edge of gallery forest and riparian thicket at a few places in the south-west: a few individuals (usually in pairs) at Tambalé, Monts Mandingues, on 5–6 February 2002; at Soukoutali and Bindougou on the Bafing, on 11–15 February 2002; at Sanfinian, on 2 June 2004; and near Madina Diassa, on 24 May 2004. Known in northern Côte d'Ivoire as close as Niellé (10°12'N 05°38'W: Payne 1982) and in south-east Senegal in Niokola-Koba NP and elsewhere (Morel & Morel 1990).

Blue-billed Firefinch *Lagonosticta rubricata*

Seen feeding on the edge of gallery forest at Sanfinian (with other firefinches and Red-winged Pytilias *Pytilia phoenicoptera*) and in thickets under

Anogeissus at the Baoulé/Badinko confluence. Perhaps more widespread. Dowsett (1993) rejected earlier sight records. Known as close in northern Côte d'Ivoire as Korhogo (Payne 1982).

Quailfinch Indigobird *Vidua nigeriae*

Payne (in Fry & Keith 2004) reports it from Kara, based on a specimen collected by Duhart & Descamps (1963, under the name of *V. chalybeata*), and examined at the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris (R. B. Payne *in litt.* 2004). In Fry & Keith (2004) *V. nigeriae* is also recorded from the 'Bouche' (i.e. Boucle) du Baoulé; the origin of this is unknown, and it should be disregarded.

Barka Indigobird *Vidua larvaticola*

Reported from the Forêt de Tienfala (Payne in Fry & Keith 2004), based on a singing male tape-recorded by R. B. Payne (*in litt.* 2004). Records in the same reference, from the Boucle du Baoulé and Missira are apparently based on the sight record of '*Vidua camerunensis*' of de Bie & Morgan (1989), are from one and the same locality, and are indeterminate as to species.

Cameroon Indigobird *Vidua camerunensis*

Reported from Bougouni (Payne in Fry & Keith 2004), based on a singing male tape-recorded by R. B. Payne (*in litt.* 2004) on the Mono River. The records in the same reference from the Boucle du Baoulé and Missira are based on the same, single sighting of '*Vidua camerunensis*' of de Bie & Morgan (1989) as that attributed to *V. larvaticola*, and cannot be identified. The local host of this species is unknown.

Unconfirmed and rejected species

A few additional species have been mentioned in recent literature. Wymenga *et al.* (2002) list the following vagrants from the central Niger Delta: Common Shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*, Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*, Audouin's Gull *Larus audouinii* and Little Gull *L. minutus*. Full details have yet to be published. House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* is said by Wilson & McGregor (2002) to have occurred recently in 'Mali (J. de Groot pers. comm.)'; no details have been published and we have been unable to contact the observer.

Three published errors need correcting. The map of Yellowbill *Ceuthmochares aereus* in Borrow & Demey (2004) shows a record for the Bamako

area based on a single, unpublished sighting of three birds on a beach on the edge of the Niger (*V. Goudeseune in litt.*). This record is inherently unlikely, especially in view of the lack of suitable forest habitat in the area (pers. obs.). A recording from near Gao presented by Chappuis (2000) as the voice of Thick-billed Weaver *Amblyospiza albifrons* is in fact of White-billed Buffalo Weaver *Bubalornis albirostris* (C. Chappuis *in litt.* agrees with this correction). The distribution map of Wilson's Indigobird *Vidua wilsoni* in Fry & Keith (2004) extends its range into Mali, but there is no mention of this in the text, nor in Payne (1985).

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- Le Pouget, 30440 Sumène, France. E-mail: Dowsett@aol.com.*

Appendix. Gazetteer of localities in Mali Annexe. Liste des localités citées

Bafing/Balé confluence, near Bindougou	12°14'N 10°20'W
Bagoé bridge area	11°28'N 06°35'W
Bamako	13°30'N 06°18'W
Baoulé/Badinko confluence	13°42'N 09°35'W
Baoulé/Bakoye confluence	13°32'N 09°54'W
Baoulé crossing west of Négala	12°56'N 08°38'W
Baoulé-sud (near Madina Diassa)	10°48'N 07°40'W
Batamani	14°53'N 04°02'W
Lac Débo	15°18'N 04°09'W
Dédiéten	16°18'N 01°14'W
Douentza	15°00'N 02°57'W
Farako	11°14'N 05°26'W
Gao	16°16'N 00°03'W
Mare de Gossi	15°48'N 01°19'W
Gourma-Rharous	15°52'N 01°56'W
Kalana	10°47'N 08°12'W
Kangaba	11°56'N 08°25'W
Korionomé	16°40'N 03°02'W
Missira, P.N. de la Boucle du Baoulé	c.13°28'N 09°12'W
Mono River, Bougouni	c.11°25'N 07°29'W
Nalla	10°46'N 08°05'W
Pont-Bani	13°13'N 05°54'W
Sagabari	12°35'N 09°48'W
Sanfinian	12°31'N 09°56'W
Soukoutali, Bafing River	12°29'N 10°17'W
Teli, Bandiagara	c.14°21'N 03°37'W
Forêt de Tienfala	12°44'N 07°45'W
Tirharhar Mt, Adrar des Iforas	19°33'N 01°12'E
Tambalé	12°33'N 08°53'W
Tombané	12°16'N 08°46'W
Woroni falls	10°47'N 05°34'W
Yanfolila marsh	11°11'N 08°09'W